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Girls basketball: Wildcats' Wenig hits 1,000 points

Milestone comes as a surprise to senior in West loss

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NEENAH — An historic evening turned into a forgettable evening for the Oshkosh West girls basketball team on Friday night.

Entering Friday's contest, the Wildcats were one game out of first place in the Fox Valley Association and Megan Wenig was five points shy of 1,000 for her career. With less than three minutes to play, it looked like quite an evening for West.

<http://www.thenorthwestern.com/apps/pbcs.dll/gallery?Avis=U0&Dato=20090130&Kategori=OSH0205&Lopenr=901300820&Ref=PH>target="new">Click here for a photo gallery from the game

However, the Wildcats stumbled down the stretch, getting outscored 6-0, and took a little shine of Wenig's big evening as the Wildcats dropped a 44-43 decision at Ron Einerson Fieldhouse.

"They went on that 6-0 run at the end, and not getting a rebound on a free throw when there is four of us and one of them, it just really hurts right now," Wenig said. "We have to bounce back and turn things around."

West (10-5, 10-3) held multiple five-point leads in the fourth quarter, the last coming at 43-38 on a Wenig basket.

The Wildcats seemed poised to win their 11th FVA game and then the Rockets (11-3, 9-3) rallied to grab a 44-43 lead with 22.6 seconds remaining.

West called a timeout and had the length of the court to go. The first option was Wenig, who was swarmed, and then West looked to Tatum Schultz. She drove to the right side of the basket and shot a contested shot that missed.

"The play broke down," West coach Niki Sutter said.

West fouled with 2.7 seconds remaining. Neenah missed the free throw, but with four West players on the lane to rebound, the Neenah shooter got her hands on the ball and the clock ran out.

"Story of our season, can't finish," Sutter said. "We took an ill-advised shot in there and didn't guard the other team's best shooter. You're not going to win a ballgame by doing that.

"It's small things that if done correctly, the win would've been ours."

At the start of the game, the focus was on Wenig, who entered the game with 995 career points. She hit her 1,000th point on a pull-up jumper from 15 feet on a fast break with 4 minutes, 28 seconds left in the second quarter.

When the ball swished through, West fans stood, cheered and held signs on the achievement, as

Wenig was at 1,001 points. It was easily the best moment of the game, but the player of the moment wasn't really aware of her point total.

"I didn't know I was that close," said Wenig, who's the fourth player in West girls history to reach 1,000 points. "It's an accomplishment, considering not too many people have done it."

Sutter knew what the accomplishment meant, but after a tough loss it just doesn't feel as good.

"It was bittersweet," Sutter said. "She would've rather scored zero tonight and take a 'w.'"

West entered the week on a six-game winning streak and tied for first place. It ends the week tied in for second with Neenah and Kimberly in the loss column. Trailing Appleton West by two games with five to play, the realistic goal is to now place second.

"It really stinks losing here," Wenig said. "It was important for the tournament, too, for our seed. We need to regroup and get what we had."

Notes: Wenig is tied for third place all-time in West girls basketball scoring with Savanna Anderson. ... Lauren Probst (two) and Wenig (one) hit three straight 3-pointers to give West a 27-24 lead early in the third quarter. ... West and Neenah could meet again in a sectional at Neenah.

Game ball: Wenig. It's not often someone reaches 1,000 career points.

Numbers game: 1,013 Career points for Wenig.

Neenah 44, Oshkosh West 43

OSHKOSH WEST 10 6 18 9 — 43

NEENAH 10 8 14 12 — 44

OSHKOSH WEST (10-5, 10-3)

Chelsea Kierszh 6, Megan Wenig 18, Katie Luethe 6, Tatum Schultz 7, Lauren Probst 6. Totals: 16 5-9 43. Total fouls: 15. Fouled out: None. Three-pointers: 4 (Wenig 2, Probst 2).

NEENAH (11-3, 9-3)

Brittany Thayer 9, Paige Grissman 6, Becca Stern 6, Taylor Zehren 9, Lexi Masiak 10, Catherine Mayer 2, Amanda Canner 2. Totals: 16 9-13 44. Total fouls: 10. Fouled out: None. Three-pointers: 1 (Zehren).
